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# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

IN CHARGE OF

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COLORADO.—The Denver Visiting Nurse Association (Mary A. Mackay, superintendent) celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary on February 15. Some of the original directors were present and told the history of the beginning of the work, its earlier progress, its trials and tribulations. After the meeting was over, a tea for the directors and the nurses was held, the tea being so planned that each director took a nurse in with her as her special guest. In this way the staff and the board met together to talk over their mutual interests and their common work. These "staff teas," as we call them in Chicago, are functions very much enjoyed by both directors and nurses, and the associations holding them are sure to create thereby a very much warmer interest in their work on the part of both board and staff, for when the directors cease to be an impersonal body to the nurses, the staff becomes more interested in the association as a piece of work being carried out for the patients by others, as well as by themselves, the net result being better, more thoughtful work in the homes, for it is impossible to associate with a really interested board of women and not carry some of their spirit and enthusiasm into the detailed work required in the homes of the neediest patients.

KENTUCKY.—During the Mississippi Valley Conference held in Louisville last October, the 68 public health nurses working in different parts of Kentucky were invited to a special meeting. Forty-eight of these nurses were present and they decided to organize a public health nursing section of the Kentucky State Graduate Nurses' Association. Twenty-nine of these 68 nurses are in Louisville. The State Tuberculosis Commission has some nurses serving as traveling supervisors throughout the state, whose duties take them into towns and counties desiring or in need of public health education. The supervisor then works to so organize local opinion that a permanent public health nurse is called to that locality, when the supervisor's time there is completed.

OHIO.—The Public Health Nurses' Club of Cleveland completed another year January 25, 1917. A good deal of interest has been manifested in the club and a large number of nurses in public health work

have availed themselves of this opportunity to meet each other and to hear on several occasions a good program of one sort or another. In December an evening meeting was held and music, games and dancing were much enjoyed by all. The officers elected for next year are as follows: chairman, Emma Mandery; vice-chairman, Lucy Bushey; secretary, Charlotte Ludwig; treasurer, Caroline Wuertz. E. Leverne Gamble and Gertrude Williams of the Visiting Nurse Association, have gone to Piqua and Sidney, Ohio, respectively, to start public health nursing. The best wishes of a large circle of friends go with them. A few months ago the survey of the public schools of Cleveland, which had been in process for over one and a half years, was completed. About twenty-five separate reports were made, one of which is of particular interest to public health nurses. "Health work in the Public Schools of Cleveland," is one of a series of monographs published by the Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation and contains excellent reports of the medical inspection work in the schools. Dr. Leonard P. Ayres, who conducted the School Survey, goes so far as to say that it is probable that the health work done in the Cleveland schools is unsurpassed by that of any other city in the country. This report may be had for 25 cents from the Burrows Brothers, Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio. The tuberculosis nurses of Cleveland have recently moved to their quarters in the new City Hall on Lakeside Avenue and East 6th Street. The quarters are comfortable, but large gatherings such as staff meetings, are held in the Council Chamber on the third floor.

**POST-GRADUATE WORK.**—The Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association, with the coöperation of the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin, has planned a very comprehensive three months' course in Public Health Nursing for graduate nurses, and a shorter, advanced course of six weeks for nurses who have been engaged in actual service. Both courses are under the direct supervision of Catherine Olmsted, (Johns Hopkins), and in addition to excellent lecture work and classroom conferences and demonstrations, include practical work and observation with the various public health nursing agencies, the State Industrial Commission, relief agencies, and visits of inspection to institutions for the sick, the delinquent, the unfortunate, and children and adults. The course is given in Milwaukee, which is particularly well fitted to be the headquarters of such a course, both because of the splendid spirit of coöperation which exists between the many agencies interested in public health and family rehabilitation, and also because of the unusually high standard of work which is done locally and throughout the state by the Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Society.

Milwaukee is the largest city in the state of Wisconsin and nurses are constantly being requested for small town work, county work, and very rural work, therefore the course is going to cover observation lectures and conferences in the work required of these nurses, differentiating it from that required of nurses working in large cities, where coöperation with and relief through other societies is such a comparatively simple matter. This is the second year for these courses and the State Association cannot yet begin to fill the demands for nurses who have had this special post-graduate training.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.—*Question:* "I have recently had letters from two young women now in their senior year of training. Both want to enter public health work and both feel that the one and only way to do it is to take special studies before beginning. I have tried to dissuade them, feeling that they would get more good out of their year of study, both for themselves and their work, if they would do some public health work first, say for a year or two. It seems to me that they could apply their theoretical work better after having had a taste of its actual working conditions. It now occurs to me that I may be quite wrong, that the average training school pupil is not fitted to begin public health work fresh from the training school. Where should I stand?"

*Answer:* My personal advice to all senior nurses who want to come into public health nursing is that they do at least six months or a year's private duty before attempting district work. It enables them to meet all kinds and classes of patients, physicians and families, which helps develop poise, an ability to think for themselves, to act quickly in home emergencies, to assume responsibility, and to do many things that not even the best hospital training can teach them. It has been my experience that the nurses who go into district work without some private duty experience, have to learn by their own mistakes a great deal which the average private duty nurse picks up instinctively. Then, too, most newly graduated nurses have no, or very small, bank balances. Six months' private duty teaches a nurse how to spend her own money, and as a rule, gives her a fairly decent balance for use in emergencies. I should never think of advising a course in public health nursing to any woman who had not had either private duty experience or district experience, or both. In the first place, much of this is pure theory. The inexperienced nurse does not know how much is theory and how much is fact. She cannot enter into discussions intelligently; she cannot make the most of round tables because she knows home economics and district home conditions on paper only; she cannot possibly get as much out of a course as she will three or four

years hence. A senior nurse does not know what she is talking about when she suggests taking up public health nursing as post-graduate work before she has tried field work or private duty nursing. Most associations would take her on their staffs after she had had a few private cases, but hardly before. Many of the nurses who try public health nursing work without this experience fail to make good. Last, but by no means least, district work is so much more interesting than private duty nursing that few nurses return to the latter voluntarily, yet the experience is an invaluable one for every nurse, another reason why the young graduate should try that work early in her career.

**BABY WELFARE WEEKS.**—Many questions have been asked about special work for Baby Weeks. The following report from Mary Garretson (Mary Thompson Hospital, Chicago), community nurse for the Winnetka Relief and Aid Society, of Illinois, may answer some of them:

In response to the appeal for a nation-wide Baby Welfare Week, the village of Winnetka decided to celebrate Baby Welfare Sunday. The first plans were made by the Educational Committee of the Woman's Club and the members asked for assistance from the schools—Parents' and Teachers' Association, the Relief Aid Society, the Infant Welfare Society, the Health Officer, the Visiting Nurse and Community House. Our first thought was to have an exhibit which would be borrowed from someone, somewhere, but when we looked about we found that exhibits were to be made, not borrowed, and we know now that our little exhibit was all the more effective because of the time and thought that went into it. In our town, when we plan any event of general interest we send a notice to the village mailing list which includes every one in town. These cards were mailed, and in addition, the visiting nurse wrote 175 personal notes to the women she knew should be interested. A group of children from a private school made several very lovely posters for shop windows and our newspaper *The Weekly Talk* gave us plenty of advertising space. From the public schools we had a good display of well written papers and stories with such topics as these: "Indian Babies," "The Fly," "Our Visit to a Dairy Farm," and "My Baby Sister." Our exhibit was arranged at Community House and consisted of the usual displays of baby clothing, toilet articles and food, several dolls dressed in various costumes, both good and bad, ice boxes, fly traps, garbage cans, and many charts and posters. Winnetka supports an Infant Welfare Station at the Chicago Commons and they had many photographs showing their work, all pleasantly explained by their nurse, Miss Carter. The village pulmotor was also on exhibition. During the afternoon several of the children read their little stories to us and we had an illustrated talk by Mr. Greene, a dairy man, explaining very clearly his ideas on the preparation of milk. In the evening Dr. Frank Churchill of Chicago told us of the work of the Chicago Infant Welfare Society and we had two moving picture films, one showing "Better Babies" and the other "The Life of a Fly." We were very much pleased to see the interest shown by our town people and we feel that our efforts may bring better care to some Winnetka babies and that our people will have a better understanding of the national movement to save the babies.